

**TESTIMONY**  
**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**HOUSE BILL NO. 5504**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING NOTICE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR PROJECTS**  
**CONSIDERED AND APPROVED BY THE SITING COUNCIL**  
**MARCH 10, 2016**

Distinguished members of the Energy and Technology Committee. This testimony is offered by the Glastonbury Town Council in support of House Bill No. 5504- An Act Concerning Notice and Public Information Sessions for Projects Considered and Approved by the Siting Council. This testimony is based upon our experience with a 3.4 megawatt fuel cell project approved and constructed near a residential neighborhood in Glastonbury. While the Siting Council approved this project in 2009, construction did not begin until 2015 or 5-6 years after initial approval.

Several factors support this proposed legislation.

- Conditions influencing the original approval process can change over time. For example the longer a period between approval and construction the greater likelihood that homes will change hands with new homeowners.
- Property owners affected by a particular project, such as a fuel cell, should be proactively informed and afforded every opportunity to comment on a particular project.
- Local development projects are typically approved for a particular time period and require a formal extension or renewal process.
- Approvals by the Siting Council should not be open-ended and a reasonable effective period established after which a formal process is required to extend or renew the original approval.

In our opinion, the legislation proposed under HB No. 5504 is a step in the right direction and should receive your support. At the same time, based upon the Glastonbury experience we would respectfully suggest additional standards be incorporated to Siting Council protocols to the extent not now part of such procedures.

As you know, the Siting Council is now empowered with sole jurisdiction over matters falling under its jurisdiction. This includes communication towers and fuel cells which can significantly influence a neighborhood and community. Accordingly public notice and opportunity for public comment are important to any application.

Examples of new protocols include the following:

- Establish a mandatory public hearing process to be conducted by the Siting Council.
- Require the applicant to forward written notice to the owners of property located within 1,000 feet of a proposed project noticing the public hearing and describing the proposed project.
- Vest authority at the local level for project components such as landscaping, parking and access, lighting, noise, signage and other such items.
- Require the applicant to submit engineered plans for site, building(s), structure(s) and all other project components when seeking action by the Siting Council. This information should be available at all public hearings. Siting Council action should be based upon such detailed plans (this is similar to the plan details required by a typical Special Permit process).
- Changes to the original approval should be noticed in advance to property owners with the opportunity for public comment.
- Provide opportunity for public comment at all Siting Council meetings concerning a particular project.

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The Town Council certainly understands and appreciates the challenges faced by the Siting Council. A difficult assignment. However, projects like the 3.4 MW fuel cell constructed in Glastonbury offer a number of opportunities to improve the process and most particularly the opportunity for public notice and public comment. The Glastonbury Town Council respectfully seeks your support of House Bill No. 5504 and support for the other recommendations noted herein.

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

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